

# Scripture

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## EDITORIAL

*Newman Lectures.* The Biblical lectures at the Newman Centre, 31 Portman Square, London W1 are now about to begin their fifth year. They may be regarded as well established both as Newman Lectures and also as Extension Lectures of the London University Board of Extramural Studies. Though the average number has not been high, nevertheless the students attending the course have been uniformly attentive and even enthusiastic. On Friday 1 October 1954 at 6.30 p.m. the course on the New Testament begins, given as usual by Rev. Dr Fuller and Rev. Dr Leahy. The lecture is followed by a discussion period and written work is also expected from time to time from those who desire to qualify as "effective" students. The aim of the lectures is to inform the student, who is not specialising, of everything he could reasonably be expected to know about the subject and in general to bring his knowledge up to date. We hope to see an increase in the numbers of students this year. Application should be made to the Registrar, Newman Centre, 31 Portman Square, London W1.

*Annual General Meeting of the Catholic Biblical Association.* This will take place at the Newman Centre, 31 Portman Square, W1 on Thursday 6 January 1955 at 6 p.m. The Officers of the Association tender their resignation to take effect from the following meeting, and offer themselves for re-election. Other nominations for the posts of Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary and Editor, should be made and handed to the Secretary not less than two weeks before the meeting, and after the consent of the nominee has been obtained. Following on the Business Meeting a Scriptural paper will be read. It would be a help if more members were able to attend this annual meeting.

*Bible Reading Plans.* From time to time in recent years we have been approached with the suggestion that we should produce some Bible Reading leaflets, such as non-Catholics have in the publications of the Bible Reading Fellowship. Such an idea was out of the question till recently as we had no funds of any description. Now that a certain amount of money has come to the Association the idea is no longer so

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impracticable. Added to this is the fact that the requests for this scheme have recently become more numerous, and we feel that something should be done. But the problem now is what? Before going any further we would like to have our readers' views on this, so that we may be sure we are meeting a real want.

## THE HOLY PLACES IN THE HOLY LAND

### I—BETHLEHEM<sup>1</sup>

The prophet Micheas (v.2) had foretold that the Messias, the hope of all Israel, would be born in Bethlehem, a small town, but one very famous in Jewish history for it had been the birthplace of King David, ancestor of the princely hero and saviour to come. We know from St Luke's Gospel how this foretelling was fulfilled, how Our Lady and St Joseph, both of the family of David, came to Bethlehem, and how Our Lord was born there and laid in a manger. A strange beginning this to that sitting on the throne of David his father and reigning in the house of Jacob forever, about which the angel of the Annunciation had told Our Lady. But so it was. We see presently the pageant of the Magi bringing royal offerings to the Child, and then any shadow of royalty fades away.

But do we, who live in the twentieth century, really know the site of that stable-cave where the divine Child was born one winter night? It is the aim of this article to provide evidence on the point.

The convert Emperor Constantine (306-37) came to Palestine and, about the year 326, built a basilica over a cave held, at that time, to have been the scene of Christ's birth. This basilica remains to our own day and, except for some alterations made by the Emperor Justinian (528-65) in the east end, stands just as Constantine built it. We have the evidence of an adventurous pilgrim who in 333 came to Palestine, and has left us an account of his pilgrimage. He writes: ". . . Bethlehem where Our Lord Jesus Christ was born, there a basilica has been built by order of Constantine". Thus, only seven years after its building, this man who came from Bordeaux saw the basilica in its austere dignity. Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, speaking in Constantinople in 335, says that Constantine "chose in that country (Palestine) three spots, sacred because they contained three mystical caves, and over these he erected splendid edifices. He gave to the place where the Lord first appeared the honour which was its due". The other places mentioned were the mount of the Ascension and the holy Sepulchre. Again, between 335 and 340, Eusebius speaks of "the cave where the Saviour first showed himself in the flesh", and says that both the Emperor and his mother St Helena adorned the cave in the richest fashion, sparing neither gold nor silver nor the finest woven stuffs.

<sup>1</sup> This article contains the substance of a chapter on the subject by Rev. Fr Gaetano Perella, C.M., in his book, *I Luoghi Santi*, and is translated by Miss Mary Chadwick, and published by permission of the Vincentian Fathers.

We have here the witness of two contemporaries of Constantine as to the building of a basilica over the cave at Bethlehem. We shall now follow the tradition backward from Constantine and again we quote Eusebius. Writing between 315 and 325, he says that the people about Bethlehem show to those who come "the field where the Virgin laid her babe after his birth". The field? Yes, because this being before the building of the basilica, the cave lay open to the fields near the town. St Cyril of Jerusalem speaks of the woods near by. Going back now half a century, we find Origen, the great scholar, writing that in 215 he had visited Bethlehem and had seen there "the cave where he was born and in that cave the manger where he lay wrapped in swaddling clothes just as the Gospel tells in the story of his birth". This was written in 248. Before this we have St Justin, born between 100 and 110 in Palestine itself, writing of Bethlehem as the place where St Joseph took refuge "in a cave" within which the Messiah was born and "laid in a manger". This was written about 150. Then, before St Justin, there is the apocryphal "Gospel of James" which speaks of the cave of Bethlehem and Our Lord's birth within it. That this "Gospel" surrounds the story with fantastic legend does not detract from the value of its evidence as to plain facts. Its author seems to have been a Jewish Christian.

Pursuing tradition ever farther back, we come to the year 135. In that year, the Emperor Hadrian came to Palestine and, after crushing a Jewish revolt, reduced Jerusalem to the status of a Roman "colony", even changing its ancient name to that of Aelia Capitolina. He built a temple to Jupiter on Calvary and dedicated the cave of Bethlehem to Tammuz-Adonis. St Jerome writes: "Our dear Bethlehem also, the most august spot on earth. . . Bethlehem itself was overshadowed by Tammuz, that is by Adonis. The cave where Christ wept now echoed to laments for the lover of Venus". Hadrian's repressive measures fell upon both Jews and Christians; carven images, so much abhorred by Jews, were set up to overlook the ruins of their temple; the places of Christ's birth and death were likewise desecrated, apparently in order to obliterate his memory from the minds of men. What Hadrian's real motives were we shall never know, but it is certain that what he did served to keep alive the memory of these two sacred sites.

What of the tradition about them from the days of Christ to the hour of Hadrian's triumph in 135? At the hour of Christ's birth, the truth about him had been revealed to the shepherds of Bethlehem: "This day in the City of David a saviour has been born for you, the Lord Christ himself" (Lk. II.11). So said the angels and thus set the shepherds on their way to the stable. St Luke also tells us that "all those who heard the shepherds' story were full of amazement" (Lk. II.18).

No doubt the villages were full of it, but it was not long before the Child was carried off into Egypt and later to Nazareth, and so lost sight of that, when he began his public life, his fellow countrymen seem to have had no recollection of the child whom the Magi had travelled from so far to visit. Yet in 135, as we have seen, the tradition of the cave was already ancient and so well known to both Jews and Christians that Hadrian thought well to turn over the cave to a pagan worship. To go back to the first source of tradition—Our Lady, in all probability, spent the last years of her life in Jerusalem and she will most certainly have told the first Christians where the place lay in which their master was born, told them too of the events of his babyhood, the shepherds, the singing angels, the noble Magi, the deadly fear which drove his parents to carry him away into Egypt. It is indeed from her lips, directly or indirectly, that St Luke gathered the material for the early chapters of his Gospel.

Then the Apostle St James the Less became Bishop of Jerusalem and he was succeeded by Simeon, a cousin of Our Lord. After him came the line of Jewish bishops whose names Eusebius records for us. It is impossible that the story of their master's birth at Bethlehem should not have been handed down by these devoted men—as in fact it was, since in 135 it was well known even to pagans. After 135 when Hadrian banished all Jews from Jerusalem, or tried to do so, its bishops were chosen from among Gentile converts, and we have the list of their names down to the time of Constantine. The pedigree of the tradition about the cave of Bethlehem would seem to be perfectly sound.

We may remark, however, that St Luke never mentions a stable nor does he say that St Joseph took Our Lady into a cave, but he mentions a manger, and that three times, a manger within their refuge. A manger clearly implies a stable and a stable in the Judaea of those days would most naturally be a cave. In the East, the poorer people do quite often live in caves and in Judaea especially, caves were an ordinary shelter for man and beast. As Origen wrote: "Following the account given in the Gospel about the birth of Christ, there is shown in Bethlehem the cave in which he was born".

Many pilgrims came to Bethlehem before Constantine and many after him. Of the former we may make bare mention of St Justin in 145, St Melitus of Sardis in 170, Clement of Alexandria before 180, Akhadabue the Syrian in 205, Julius Africanus in 220, St Gregory of Neo-Caesarea in 233, St Antony the Abbot in 295. In 326 or thereabouts came the great Empress St Helena who, together with her son, built and adorned the great basilicas of the Holy Land. Pilgrims after Constantine are beyond counting, and we know by name only those

who have left us accounts of their journeys. St Jerome, to whom we owe the Vulgate Bible, took up his abode in Bethlehem itself in 386. He writes: "Oh see, in this little corner of the earth was born the Creator of the heavens, here he was bound in bands, here seen by the shepherds, here adored by the Magi". After him came the Lady Etheria, a noble Spaniard, in 393. She writes of the "cave" where Christ was born. The pilgrim Arculf, a bishop from Gaul, came in 670. He says that the cave had then "a lining of marble, fine and precious". The Englishman St Bede the Venerable wrote about the Holy Places in 735, he gives us Arculf's account and adds to it from other sources. St Willibald, another Englishman, arrived in Jerusalem in 725-6; Ceowulf, an Anglo-Saxon, came in 1102-3.

What sort of basilica did Constantine build? Strictly, a basilica. We can see it today, standing in its ancient majesty, altered but little since the day of its consecration. It is of excellent construction and internally is a vast rectangle 146 × 84 ft. divided by a fourfold row of columns into a nave with double aisles. Its east end was a great semi-circle with a soaring arch (somewhat altered by Justinian) and in front of the arch stood the altar. Directly beneath the altar lies the cave of the Nativity, a natural cave in limestone rock. A natural curve in the wall of the cave formed a small apse, in front of this stood a little altar. In a lower part of the cave, the manger is said to have been placed, and at least up to the time of Origen's visit in 215 it was shown to pilgrims. The manger, according to the late Fr Abel, O.P., one of the best archaeologists, will have been some kind of receptacle resting on the floor with one of its sides against the wall of the cave. Its construction will have been, wholly or in part, of clay and chopped straw. St Jerome, preaching in Bethlehem one Christmas day, laments its disappearance: "Under pretext of honouring Christ, we have taken away the manger of clay and put one of silver in its place. Oh, had I but been allowed to see the real manger where the Lord was laid!" It seems probable that St Helena who, with her son, adorned the cave so richly, gave the precious manger of silver.

The Persians who invaded Palestine in 614 destroyed many of the Christian sanctuaries, but spared the basilica at Bethlehem; it is said that they held their hands because they saw on the façade a mosaic representing the Magi in Persian dress and concluded that these were their own ancestors (see a Synodal Letter of the Council held in Jerusalem in 836). In the next invasion, of 638, by the Arabs this time, the basilica was again spared, for the Caliph Omar, seeing that one of its transepts pointed directly to Mecca, requested that he might use it for prayer. The basilica was spared yet a third time when the savage Sultan Hakim came to Palestine in 1009 and, considering the character

of this Sultan, it is not surprising that the immunity of the church was attributed to a miracle.

When the Latin Kingdom of the Crusaders was established in 1099, the basilica received all possible honour. Pope Paschal II made Bethlehem a bishopric in 1110 and, some years later, both Greeks and Latins set to work to embellish it, setting up statues of both Greek and Latin saints, and using both languages for inscriptions. When, however, the Latin Kingdom fell to the sword of Saladin in 1187, the Latins perforce withdrew and the basilica was served by Greeks only. But in the thirteenth century the Franciscans came to Bethlehem and, although the Greeks made certain concessions to them, friction was continual, so that in the sixteenth century the Greeks built a wall some six feet high right across the church so as to divide it into Greek and Latin portions. This wall stood until 1918, when it was pulled down by order of the British authorities who then occupied Palestine.

In 1634 the Greeks obtained from the Sultan Amuret IV a firman which put them in possession of the whole basilica as well as the cave of the Nativity, but when Louis XIV protested, the cave was handed back to the Franciscans in 1689. There, under the little altar of the Nativity, they replaced the silver star which the Greeks had removed, and also restored the inscription that surrounded it and ran: *Hic de Virgine Maria Christus natus est*. But the Greeks were not disposed to remain at peace and a series of encroachments culminated in a raid upon the crypt in 1873 when they sacked the place and wounded several of the friars. After this affair, the Turkish Government ordered that a sentry should stand in the crypt by night and by day.

The entrance to Constantine's splendid basilica has suffered greatly. Huge stone buttresses, blackened by time, disfigure the façade, and instead of Constantine's triple doors opening into the nave there is but one entry—a mean aperture so low that a man must stoop to pass under it. This is a record of a time so barbarous that Turkish soldiers would force their way in on horseback. In 1944 a thorough cleansing of the basilica and the sacred cave was carried out, so that the pilgrim of today can see something at least of the ancient glory.

It would be interesting to know what became of the silver manger which was substituted for the original "manger of clay" of which St Jerome tells us. It may have been sent to Constantinople with other treasures when Persian and Arab invasions had descended on Palestine, for in 1157 there was to be seen there "the manger in which the Saviour was laid". And after that? We do not know. In the seventh century the famous church of Our Lady in Rome, Santa Maria Maggiore, became known as Sancta Maria ad Praesepe, Our Lady of the Crib, and good authorities say that this title was given when some



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fragments of rock from the cave of the Nativity were brought there and, having been enclosed in a leaden box, were deposited under the altar at which the Popes were accustomed to say Mass on Christmas Eve.

It would seem that we need have no hesitation in holding :

- 1 That the existing basilica at Bethlehem was built by the Emperor Constantine.
- 2 That he built it over a cave held to be the birthplace of Christ.
- 3 That this tradition rested on a perfectly sound tradition which can be traced back to the earliest times, the beginning of the Christian era.



## A REFUGE OF THE SANHEDRIN

At Beit-Shearim, ten miles west of Nazareth, the Israel Exploration Society held on 3 September 1953 a full-scale press conference to publicise the results of N. Avigad's month of renewed excavation.<sup>1</sup> As the hospitality extended to the press corresponded to the importance of the discoveries, it seems opportune to detail here what may be of interest to Christian exegetes in this stopping-place of Judaism's supreme council in its gradual forced migration from Jerusalem to Tiberias.

The site is located on the Palestine survey (1:100000 Sheet 4 Zikhron) at the co-ordinates 16242359 under the name Khirbet Sheikh Bureik. It was commonly called Sheikh Abreq when its ancient remains were noticed by Alexander Zaid and thereupon excavated by Benjamin Maisler from 1936 to 1940.<sup>2</sup> Dr Maisler, who has since adopted the name of Mazar and become Rector of the Hebrew University, is known for his skilful excavation of Tell Qasileh, which he considers to be the site of Jaffa at the period when Solomon's cedars were conveyed up the Yarqon River there.<sup>3</sup> In his campaigns at Sheikh Abreq, Maisler unearthed eleven great sepulchres or catacombs, some containing a hundred burials. Moreover the floor-level of a synagogue dated near A.D. 200 was found to be the largest known in Israel.<sup>4</sup>

These facts led the excavators to believe, at the suggestion of Professor S. Klein, that Sheikh Abreq must represent the site of the important Talmudic centre known as Beit Shearim, the Besara to which Josephus fled from Semûnia. This had been previously localised by Dalman at Jedda, some three miles east of Sheikh Abreq.<sup>5</sup> Near Jedda in fact was founded a Sionist colony which continues to bear

<sup>1</sup> The Editor regrets the unavoidable delay in publishing this article. The reports were published in most Israeli newspapers on page 1 of Friday 4 September 1953; the account in *Ha-Aretz* is recommended. A. H. Elhanani in *Davar* avoids precision; the English account by Lucian O. Meysels in *The Jerusalem Post* contains inaccuracies of detail.

<sup>2</sup> *Bulletin of the Jewish Palestine Exploration Society*, IV (1936), pp. 79-82; 117-118; V (1937), pp. 49-76; 77-97.

<sup>3</sup> B. Maisler, *The Excavations at Tell Qasile, Jerusalem 1951*; = *Israel Exploration Journal*, I (1950-1), pp. 61-76 (-83), 125-40, 194-218.

<sup>4</sup> Description by Maisler in *Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities of Palestine*, IX (1942), 212-15; see also VI (1937), p. 222; VII (1938), pp. 51-3.

<sup>5</sup> G. Dalman, "Nach Galiläa 1921", in *Palästina-jahrbuch*, XIX (1923), p. 38; he notes that Schwarz had claimed Tu'ran near Tabor is the Aramaic equivalent of Shearim. Adolphe Neubauer, *Géographie du Talmud*, Paris 1868, p. 200, had favoured Es-Sar'ah near Sepphoris. A map of these localities is given by Maisler in *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society*, XVIII (1938), p. 42; for the identification, see p. 41 and *Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities of Palestine*, IX (1942), p. 214: a broken marble plaque mentions [B]esar[a].

the name of Beit Shearim. But Maisler's discovery gained general acceptance,<sup>1</sup> and the "archaeological Beit Shearim" was indicated as such on the maps and guidebooks and began to draw crowds of interested tourists.

As is known, the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus in A.D. 70 resulted in the suppression of the Sanhedrin in the form and competence with which it then existed, and the dominant Sadducean element disappeared from history altogether. But the authoritative Pharisees escaped to Yabne and there founded under Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai a Sanhedrin of canonical rather than political character, in which Rabbi Aqiba was the most conspicuous figure.<sup>2</sup> Aqiba's support of the rebel Bar-Kochba brought him a martyr's death and the dispersion of his Yabne community. On the day of Aqiba's death, but at a place unknown, there was born to Rabbi Simeon ben-Gamaliel II a son who was destined to be called "the Prince", Rabbi Yehuda ha-Nasi, or in the Mishna "Rabbi" *simpliciter*, *par excellence*. Ha-Nasi is known to have spent his youth in Usha; this site is located seven miles east of Haifa, where a number of cave-tombs have yielded poorly preserved inscriptions. It may be presumed that this was the then see of the Supreme Council, where an important meeting was held.<sup>3</sup> A few miles farther east is Shefar'am, which was also a centre of second-century Jewry, though the site is now a flourishing Arab-Christian town. Ha-Nasi studied under Yehuda ben-Ilai but not apparently under Meir, rabbis of this epoch known as Tannaïtes, an Aramaic word which means "composers of the Mishna", because from before Aqiba they were gradually editing the materials which ha-Nasi, last of the Tannaïtes, was to give final codification in the Mishna.<sup>4</sup>

Ha-Nasi succeeded to Hillel as head of the Jewish Council and at the beginning of his public activity transferred the patriarchate to Beit-Shearim. The Mishna treatise on the Sanhedrin (32b) declares, "To Beit Shearim must one go in order to receive Rabbi's decision on legal matters". Of his competence as a teacher nothing can be said more to his credit than to cite his justly famed admission, "I have learned much from my masters, more from my colleagues than

<sup>1</sup> Unaccountably A.-G. Barrois, *Manuel d'archéologie biblique*, Paris 1953, p. 2310, makes no mention of Beit-Shearim in alluding to Sheikh Abreg.

<sup>2</sup> Pierre Benoit, "Rabbi Aqiba ben Joseph" in *Revue biblique*, LVI (1947), p. 88; Emil Schürer, *Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes im Zeitalter Jesu Christi*, Leipzig 1901, p. 1658; 1907 edn., p. 2442.

<sup>3</sup> W. Bacher, "Judah I" in *Jewish Encyclopaedia*, VII (1907), pp. 333-7 gives the reference Gen. R. LVIII, Eccl. R. I.10, Bab. Kid. 72b for the birth of ha-Nasi. Compare Jelski, *Die innere Einrichtung des grossen Synedrions zu Jerusalem und ihre Fortsetzung im späteren palästinensischen Lehrhause bis zur Zeit des R. Jehuda ha-Nasi*, Breslau 1894.

<sup>4</sup> The Aramaic root *tena'* "repeat" corresponds to the Hebrew *šānah*, as *tinyān*, Dan. II, 7; VII, 5 corresponds to *šēnayim* "two".

from my masters, and more from my pupils than from all the others".<sup>1</sup>

The large synagogue of Beit-Shearim where Yehuda ha-Nasi would have taught stands at the top of a knoll, facing Jerusalem. In it have been found some pieces of mosaic and other architectural ornaments. Immediately behind it to the north is another large public building erected under the Antonines, as is evidenced by the fine stonework of a corner-wall surviving to a height of several feet. The large squared blocks resemble the so-called Herodian masonry of the Jerusalem wailing-wall and Hebron patriarchal tomb, except that Herod's masons smoothed off the margins and left the boss rough, while the Antonines polished smooth also the boss of the visible surface. This building recalls that ha-Nasi was personally acquainted with the Antonine emperors: probably those who visited Palestine, Marcus Aurelius in 175 and Septimius Severus in 200. It is said that Rabbi owed his high position to the favour of these emperors, but the traditions about them may refer merely to their representatives in Palestine.<sup>2</sup>

To the west of the Antonine building stands a monumental gate whose investigation was one of the principal objectives of Avigad's campaign. Its remains show it to have been a most splendid and conspicuous example of this type of architecture. One might even suspect that it bears some relation to the Hebrew name *beit šearim*, which means "house of gates", though we will see that the catacombs offer plausible alternatives. The door-grooves of the city gate may be clearly seen; and inside the structure are several rooms, one of which contains a complex example of an olive-press.

Toward the north-west of the synagogue-knoll the ground falls away steeply, and along the sides and base of this bank are the Beit-Shearim tombs, of which more than a thousand have already been discovered. They include all the types of Jewish burial known to have been in use at the beginning of our era: *arcosolia*, *kokim*, pits; with and without ossuary; there are even wooden coffins and sarcophagi of lead, stone and pottery.<sup>3</sup>

The most imposing of the catacomb-entries is the one recently cleared by Avigad, just west of the monumental gate but at a considerably lower level. It has a high false façade, consisting of three Roman-influenced stone arches, not excavated into the soft rock hillside as one would expect but built up against it. Low in the middle arch is a small blocked-up doorway. Inside this tomb were found

<sup>1</sup> Makkot 10a; Epstein, *Babylonian Talmud*, London 1935, Seder Neziqin Makkoth, p. 65.

<sup>2</sup> Bacher in *Jewish Encyclopaedia*, vii (1907), p. 335.

<sup>3</sup> Maisler in *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society*, xviii (1938), p. 44.

inscribed the names Rabbi Simeon and Rabbi Gamliel without patronymic. The excavators announced that it was a known fact that Yehuda ha-Nasi was buried at Beit-Shearim and that he had two sons named Simeon and Gamliel. Obviously the reporters were expected to conclude that the 1953 campaign had discovered the burial-place of the two sons of ha-Nasi, but the excavators carefully dissociated themselves from this conclusion. Their prudent reserve is understandable when we recall the furore that was caused when a Berlin news-agency, reporting Sukenik's discussion of a first-century ossuary marked "Jesus son of Joseph", proclaimed that the genuine tomb of Christ had been found.<sup>1</sup> Like Joseph and the Hebrew name which may be rendered in English as Jesus or Josue or even Isaias, the names Simeon and Gam(a)liel were common among all classes of the people. It may be remarked, however, that Gamliel son of ha-Nasi is of great importance to the history of the Mishna, since it was he who took over the work which his father's death left unfinished, and it was he who inserted the numerous decisions of his father with the honorifically anonymous formula "Rabbi says".

In the same imposing mausoleum which contains the burials of "Simeon and Gamliel", other inscriptions more adequately identify two of the Amoraim, Simeon ben-Yohanan and Yudan bar-ha-Lewi. "Amoraim" is the name given to the generations succeeding ha-Nasi, last of the Tannaïtes. Whereas the Tannaïtes consisted only of six generations and few doctors, there are some three thousand Amoraim whose names are preserved.

A second catacomb discovered by Avigad is of even greater significance. It, too, is of striking architecture. It contains a central court from which several entrances lead off into various chambers. These entrances have stone doors, still in position, and of exquisitely skilful ornamentation. Already in the earlier-known catacombs there was one sample of a finely carved stone door. We cannot help wondering whether the name "House of Gates" is connected with these fine stone doors, or with the imposing triple arch just mentioned, rather than with the city gate. It must be considered more probable, of course, that the town already had its name before it acquired these architectural adornments.

This second catacomb was the richest in historical information in all fields available from its numerous *inscriptions*, as studied and described by Professor M. Schwabe of the Hebrew University. Artistically they are of comparatively little value, since most of them are painted casually in red ochre or scratched on to the soft stone, and not

<sup>1</sup> Hugues Vincent, "Építaphe prétendue de N.-S. J.-C.", in *Atti-Rendiconti della Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia*, VII (1931), pp. 215-39.

centred or framed. They are in three languages, Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek; the earlier campaigns mentioned some also in Palmyrene.<sup>1</sup> It was a most illuminating discovery that Greek outnumbers Semitic in the inscriptions in the proportion of five to one. Dr Schwabe declares that we had never hitherto realised the extent to which this highly judaising milieu had in fact been hellenised. We may point out, however, the passage of *Sotah* 49b where ha-Nasi himself proclaims that Jews of Palestine who do not know Hebrew should prefer to speak Greek rather than Aramaic; he considered it no more foreign, and more cultural. One bizarre *graffito* in this Beit-Shearim catacomb gives a schoolboy's credo, a sketched seven-branched candlestick as symbol of the Jewish faith, preceded by Greek letters forming the Hebrew words *egdal le-*: "I shall grow up for the Law!" Also of philological interest is the use of the Greek word *apsis* to designate the whole burial chamber as well as a single niche.

Several Aramaic inscriptions contain a curse against the tomb-opener, as in Shakespeare's epitaph.<sup>2</sup> The formula *sôf biš* "a shameful end" is a regular postexilic one. But at Beit-Shearim it did not prevent the boring of large holes by ancient robbers who removed all the bones and all but a few glass and bronze utensils. Hence the archaeological booty left for modern pirates is negligible. But theologians will pounce upon the interesting presuppositions regarding the future life in the epitaph: "Him who alters the state of this woman, lo the one who raises the dead and gives them life, himself will judge".

The chief importance of the Beit-Shearim inscriptions is geographical. Personages were brought here for interment from Eilat (Aqaba), Babylon, Tadmor (Palmyra), Gebl (Byblos), Tyre. There is also "Euspidios son of Ammi, the gracious archisynagogos of the people of Beirut". Most engrossing is the inscription "Aidessios gerouciarch of Antioch". Aidessios "the Edessan" implies an incidental link with northern Syria. *Gerouciarchos* is considered by the excavators to be a legitimate mode of writing *gerousiarchos*: the iota is abusively written as the diphthong epsilon-iota (of similar pronunciation) and this epsilon is combined with the sigma (*c*); this is tantamount to deleting the sigma, as when a typist strikes an *e* over a *c*. Would it not be much simpler and just as satisfactory to say that *e* was just a mistake for *s*? The Hebrew University savants deduce from this inscription the hitherto-unknown fact that Antioch possessed a significantly large and

<sup>1</sup> *Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities of Palestine*, vii (1938), p. 51.

<sup>2</sup> Father Dyson kindly calls to my attention the two Sidon epitaphs of Tabnith and Eshmunazar, about 300 B.C., menacing the tomb-robber with exclusion from repose among the Rephaim; Cooke, *North-Semitic Inscriptions*, Oxford 1903, pp. 26, 30.

organised Jewish community.<sup>1</sup> But one might have perhaps inferred as much from the fact that it was the first city where members of a certain innovating Jewish sect became known as Christians, Acts XI.26. Indeed, those who first preached Jesus in Antioch are declared to have addressed themselves "*also* to the Greeks" Acts XI.20.

The conclusion which the excavators rightly draw from the toponymic galaxy of these epitaphs is that after Hadrian's prohibition of Jewish burials at Josaphat in the Kedron valley, Beit-Shearim became the centre to which leaders of Jewry from the whole Middle East were brought for interment. Is there possibly in this fact also a plausible (though too tardy) origin of the name "House of Gates" . . . into Sheol? Surely the catacombs excavated in 1936-40, with their entrance through a cleft in the steep hillside, are not unlike the imagined entry of Virgil or Dante into the underworld.

As for the Sanhedrin, or its post-Jerusalem equivalent, it was not destined to remain here. Yehuda ha-Nasi himself was compelled in the interest of his health to spend the last seventeen years of his life at Sepphoris, a few miles north of Nazareth (claimed by uncertain tradition to have been the home of Joachim and Anne). We learn from *Ketuvot* 103b that Rabbi wanted to be buried at Beit-Shearim, and had prepared his tomb there; some authorities point out his tomb at Sepphoris; but undoubtedly he would have been laid to rest at the centre which his prestige had made the focal point of Eastern Jewry's burials. Meanwhile the active teaching body of the Amoraim moved to Tiberias, where they were known to Jerome, and developed the system of vowel-points used in our Hebrew bibles today. Thereupon Beit-Shearim fell promptly out of existence. A statistic of coins found during the excavations shows that the occupation ceased before the revolution under Gallus in A.D. 352. Today Zionist colonists are bringing the House of Gates to life again.

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<sup>1</sup> C. H. Kraeling, "The Jewish Community at Antioch", in *Journal of Biblical Literature*, II (1932), p. 130, also holds that "its significance for the development of rabbinical Judaism is minimal"; p. 148, "the period of prestige and prosperity which the Jews enjoyed at Antioch came to an end toward the middle of the first century A.D.".



## PETER AT THE COUNCIL OF JERUSALEM

Professor Cullmann has recently<sup>1</sup> put forward the novel opinion that St Peter, though made head of the Church by Christ, gradually faded out, going off as a missionary after the death of James the Greater in A.D. 44 or 45, and leaving the headship to James, brother of the Lord. One test of this opinion is the position of Peter when some time later the Council of Jerusalem meets and James presides. Whatever else may be said about this new opinion, it is here desired to examine how far the evidence favours the idea that James, and not Peter, was the President of the Council. It must be admitted at once that some French Catholic writers have in recent times taken the same view, perhaps through sheer weariness with the old-fashioned papal controversies, but one is glad to see that the *Catholic Commentary* upholds, though briefly, the traditional Catholic view.

The first difficulty which one meets when trying to ascertain the true nature of the Council is the divergence of the two types of text in which *Acts* has been transmitted to us. While the *codex Bezae*, along with Irenaeus, Ephrem and others, makes the dispute of xv.1 at Antioch take place between partisans of Peter and of Paul, attributes the order that Paul should go up to Jerusalem to these partisans and seems to omit mention of the ex-Pharisees in v. 5, the text of *Vaticanus*, *Sinaiticus* and the other major codices gives no suggestion that Peter's followers are against Paul; it leaves vague the responsibility for the decision that Paul should go up to Jerusalem, not regarding this trip as a bringing of Paul to judgment, and it clearly names his adversaries in v. 5 as converts from among the Pharisees. Between these two views one can hardly decide with security until the whole relationship of the "Western" text of *Acts* to the more usual one in *Sinaiticus*, etc. has been decided. However that question may be settled, it is clear that the view of the episode held by the *codex Bezae*, Ephrem and the rest must represent the tradition of a large part of the Church from at least the middle of the second century, and is therefore of much value in an historical question of this kind. When Ephrem writes:<sup>2</sup> "These men were of the Jews, men made disciples of by Peter and his. . . . They began to say, Unless according to the teaching of Peter and of his companions you believe, you cannot be saved", and then goes on to

<sup>1</sup> O. Cullmann, *Saint Pierre, disciple, apôtre, martyr*, 1952, pp. 36 and 42.

<sup>2</sup> These extracts from Ephrem come from his *Commentary on Acts*, an English version of which was published by F. C. Conybeare in vol. III of *The Beginnings of Christianity*, London 1926, pp. 380-453, from the Armenian. The work had been known but little used before Conybeare's translation.



describe how at the Council Peter was moved by the Holy Ghost to speak in favour of Paul's position, he may be following an inferior text, but he is showing at the same time that he had no illusions about the importance of Peter at the Council. Even Chrysostom, with his remark on xv.5-7 that Peter had been a Judaiser up to the present time, seems to have shared the views of Ephrem and (along with many modern scholars) to have supposed that the episode of Paul's withstanding Peter to his face at Antioch was already over when the Council began.

The Council is represented as a full-dress assembly of the early Church. On good Hellenistic lines its decree begins with the consecrated words: "Whereas . . . , it hath seemed good to us being met together. . . ." The assembly describes itself as: "The Apostles and presbyter-brethren", though from the narrative it appears that the whole multitude of the faithful was present, as one might expect in view of the fact that in the first fully-recorded theological assembly of early times, that described in Origen's *Dialektos*, the people are found to be all present and listening quietly, as if it was their habit to be present at such times. Hellenistic assemblies usually consisted of magistrates, senate and people, and it does not seem that this first effort of the Church would be an exception. Even among the Jews the same three-tier structure was kept in the division of priests, Sanhedrin and people, as many Roman documents show. The importance of this assimilation to general practice will be seen presently.

James, brother of the Lord and Bishop of Jerusalem, who is described by Jewish and Christian historians alike as having suffered martyrdom in or near the year 62 at the hands of the Jewish mob, cannot with absolute certainty be identified with James the Less, one of the Twelve. If he is not one of the Twelve, it is perhaps somewhat easier to argue that Peter must have been superior to him when the Council met, but the question of his identity does not greatly affect the matter at issue. The Founder's kin seem to have kept the Jerusalem bishopric in their hands, much as the House of Annas kept the High-priesthood, though not by the same methods, until the year 107, if not longer, and this idea of family-bishoprics is also attested for Asia Minor in the second century by the famous boast of Polycrates of Ephesus<sup>1</sup> that he has had seven kinsmen bishops. When in the third or fourth century the Jewish-Christian forgeries called the *Clementine Homilies*, on which Cullmann bases part of his case, represent Clement of Rome writing to James and calling him Bishop of Bishops, they are indulging in a piece of Jewish fantasy, and are of no value to the sober historian.

<sup>1</sup> In Eusebius, *Eccles. Hist.* v. 24.6.

Ephrem's description of what Peter does at the Council is of great interest. He comments: "But Shmavon (i.e. Peter), who in Antioch kept silence, when Paul stepping forth spoke against the law in Jerusalem, there dwelt in him the Holy Spirit, and he began to speak against the upholders of the Law thus". Reading in his text that Peter spoke "in the Holy Ghost" he interpreted this to mean that Peter underwent a conversion from his state of weak indecision at Antioch and now recovered his clearness of vision which he had enjoyed in the Cornelius episode. It may have been so; at all events there is no chance of mistaking the attitude of Peter now. He proposes and carries the abrogation of the rule of circumcision for convert Gentiles. The silence which follows Peter's argument is thus interpreted by Ephrem: "On a sudden they reached conviction and ceased the inquiry. For the elders acquiesced in the words of Shmavon, and without dissension was annulled the dissension through the counsel of the Spirit". That Paul and Barnabas follow this up by an argument that God has shown His approval of their past conduct, in admitting uncircumcised Gentiles, because He has worked miracles in their favour, must have confirmed the Council in its acceptance of Peter's view.

When James rises to speak, it would seem that little more is left to be said. But he wishes to propose an amendment or rider to the general resolution of Peter. This is quite a normal practice in the legislative assemblies of Hellenistic times. Many surviving decrees give the actual words of the speakers, the text coming from the original proposer, and the rider being introduced by another speaker who is reported in this fashion: "The rest as Hipparchus said; but as to a matter of detail, let this or that be done". James is doing just this. The fact that he begins with the words: "I judge" has misled many to think that he is summing up a debate, and giving the verdict of a presiding judge. In fact, the formula *ego decerno* (I judge) was used in the Roman Senate by each Senator when giving his opinion about a measure proposed, as anyone can see from such a speech as Cicero's *De provinciis consularibus*, which was spoken before the Senate. That we are entitled to interpret James's words thus is clear from the evidence of Irenaeus and Ephrem who read in their texts: "I for my part judge". One is not entitled to say that this is simply an attempt on the part of these Fathers to exalt Peter without prejudging the question at issue especially when there is good ancient evidence (such as Thucydides 1.87) for the use of κρίνω in the meaning of "to judge by giving one's vote". P  re Dupont, O.S.B., is quite correct in saying (as he does in his edition of *Acts for the Bible de J  rusalem*) that the word is here used in its most solemn meaning, as also in Acts XVI.4 and XXI.25, but it is a complete *non sequitur* for him to conclude from this that therefore

James is presiding. The other examples are plural, this is singular ; and as a singular it must be interpreted.

It is interesting to see the fate of James's rider in the ultimate formulation of the decree. He proposes it without limitation of place, yet in the decree it is only the communities of Antioch, Syria and Cilicia, to whom the regulations apply, which James has put forward as a *modus vivendi* for mixed communities of Jewish and Gentile converts. The communities in Iconium and Lystra are not covered by the decree, although they must certainly have been in existence when it was passed, and it seems reasonable to conclude that St Paul's silence about it when later on he is discussing food-laws with the Corinthians (in 1 Cor. VIII.1-13) is a sign that he did not understand it to apply to such communities. James's scriptural phrase about "the pollutions of idols" has also been edited in the final decree, and has become the more intelligible word "things offered to idols in sacrifice". Luke does not describe in detail the work of drafting the decree, but he shows by his text that such work has been carried out, and he leaves us to guess at what he has not reported.

In recent times some controversial use has been made by Anglicans of a passage in Chrysostom's commentary on *Acts*,<sup>1</sup> which is thought to give James the presidency at the Council. Chrysostom is under the impression that the Simeon to whom James refers is not Peter but some other speaker whose discourse has not been reported. He then proceeds to comment : "There was no pride in the Church but much freedom from punctilio. See how Paul speaks after Peter, and no-one shouts him down. James is patient and does not leap to his feet, for he it was who had been elected into the position of rule. John says nothing here, nor the other apostles, but they are silent and do not repine". He has made it clear what position of rule James holds by saying at the outset that he was bishop of the Church in Jerusalem. Hence it is quite clear also that Chrysostom regards Peter as superior to James. He does not represent James as likely to jump to his feet and start speaking before Peter, but, when Peter has finished, he thinks it would have been natural for James to follow, and not Paul. Earlier in his treatment of the episode Chrysostom had pointed out that Peter allowed the debate to go on in the Church first of all, and then spoke himself, thus suggesting that he was in command, and indeed, as Abbot Chapman<sup>2</sup> showed long ago, one cannot read far into this commentary on *Acts* without discovering how exalted a position Chrysostom allows to Peter. His concluding words on this episode, which have been badly misquoted in a recent controversy, can then be understood in their proper light.

<sup>1</sup> Chrysostom, *Homilies on Acts*, Migne, P. G., vol. LX, pp. 239-40.

<sup>2</sup> *Studies in the Early Papacy*, London 1928, p. 89.

After the remarks about lack of pride and punctilio, he goes on : "Peter had spoken somewhat more vehemently at the beginning, but James more mildly. Thus should one in great power always act, leaving to others the unpleasant things while basing his own argument on milder considerations. Rightly does he say : Simeon has explained, seeing that this Simeon gave the opinions of others". Here the comparison is between James, who is in a position of great power, and the unknown Simeon, who simply repeated, according to Chrysostom, the arguments of Peter ; and it was obviously tactful, on this view, for James to refer not directly to Peter, but to Simeon who had said very much the same thing. By ascribing the forthright view to Simeon rather than to Peter, says Chrysostom, James has made an opening for his milder amendment.

If this is the true account of Chrysostom's treatment of the Council-episode, it is astonishing that Anglicans could have made so much out of it. Recently there has appeared again the old objection about James's great power which in the earlier editions of his work *The Roman Catholic Claims* Gore had used, but which is missing from the eleventh edition ; now it is given by K. N. Ross<sup>1</sup> as if it was all that Chrysostom had to say on the position of Peter in the Council. What is worse, it has been publicly quoted by another Anglican as if the words were : Thus should one in *greater* power always act. If one had to give Chrysostom's real summary of the Council, one would find it at the beginning of this *Homily* where he points out how providential it was that the proposal to annul the rule of circumcision came from Peter and Paul who did not remain at Jerusalem, while James, who was bishop and teacher of the people there, could not be held liable for the decision, though he did not disagree with it. It was the decision of the whole Council, but if his flock afterwards murmured, James could always put the blame on Peter. This is hardly the conduct of a President in regard to his Council.

Anglicans sometimes plead in support of their view the text of Gal. II.9 where James, *Cephas* and John are enumerated by Paul in that order as if that would show how they stood in order of dignity and power at the time. The text is by no means certain ; a rival version which gives *Peter*, James and John as the order goes back at least to the time of Marcion, and this version is followed by Origen, Jerome, Ephrem, Ambrosiaster, Victorinus and others. But even if one supposes that the right reading is James, Cephas, John, the order can be explained reasonably enough. In a recent article Fr Gaechter, S.J.,

<sup>1</sup> *Why I am not a Roman Catholic*, London 1953, p. 48. "It was James, not Peter, who summed up the deliberations of the Apostles at the Council . . . etc."

of Innsbruck<sup>1</sup> has put his finger on the reason. He argues that James is put first because Paul is arguing with a particular Jewish opposition in view. If he can show that James above all, the leader of the party of the Law, had approved of him, that is even more important than the approval of Cephas for the present argument. That he does not think lightly however of Peter's approval appears from the use of his more solemn name Cephas, which is not often found in the pages of Paul's letters. Abbot Chapman in a now famous article in *Revue Bénédictine*, 1912, based a long argument upon this change in Paul's usage from Peter to Cephas, and the least that one can say about this argument is that it showed that where such a change occurred Paul was giving his language a more solemn tone.

The ambiguity of the opening words of St Peter's first Epistle means that it may be addressed to the strangers of the Dispersion or to the sojourners in the Dispersion, to Jews or to Gentiles, and hence one cannot argue that Peter's subsequent work was entirely done for the Jews. It would thus appear that Paul is somewhat over-emphasising his case in Gal. II.9-10 when he says that Peter was committed to work for the circumcised alone in the future. That may have been the major part of Peter's work, just as the major part of Paul's was with the Gentiles. But just as it is clear that Paul converted quite a number of Jews after this time, so it must be allowed that Peter was not without his conquests among the Gentiles. Paul is using a Jewish manner of speech in view of a Jewish opposition and his words should not be stressed to the point where it is surmised that Peter goes out from Jerusalem as the deputy of James, a missionary to the Jews of the Dispersion.

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<sup>1</sup> "Jakobus von Jerusalem" in *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie*, II (1954), p. 144.

## THE SON OF MAN

In the Old Testament the phrase "Son of Man" is used to mean a human being, often with some degree of emphasis on the weakness and dependence of men, rather as in the English use of "mortal" as a synonym for man. Thus, Ps. viii.5: "Why should you deign to think of man, or care for the son of man"; or Job xxv.6: "Man is corruption, the son of man a worm". So also in Ezechiel, where again the primary intention seems to be to stress man's nothingness in contrast to the omnipotence of God; but it is used so often (more than ninety times) that it loses its effect and comes to mean little more than a variation for "man". In Dan. vii.13, 14 one "like the son of man" appears and receives from the Ancient of days a kingdom which shall not pass away. Here, the immediate reason for the expression seems to be to indicate the superiority of this figure, human in appearance, as distinct from the animal figures which represent the previous kingdoms; but the passage is so mysterious, but at the same time so clearly a prophecy of the kingdom in some sense, that it lends itself to later development.

In the New Testament, it is the title used by Our Lord most frequently of Himself<sup>1</sup>; and in fact, it is used only by Our Lord, except for two cases: Acts vii.55, where St Stephen sees the "Son of Man" standing at the right hand of God, and Apoc. i.13 and xiv.14, in the last of which at least is clear reference to the passage in Daniel.

Before attempting a positive explanation, it will be as well to dismiss the two most common opinions on the point. The first is that "Son of Man" is a common Messianic title, derived from the prophecy of Daniel. But Lagrange<sup>2</sup> has shown that in fact this was not so; and moreover, if (as is agreed) Our Lord is careful to reveal His position gradually, how could He use "Son of Man" as a Messianic title from the earliest days of His career (Mk. ii.10, according to the most "historical" of the gospels)? We do not need to deny all Messianic content to the phrase; but surely it is more consistent with Our Lord's way of acting to avoid a title with obvious Messianic implications, and use one which would at the most discreetly suggest it. Then there is the explanation which goes to the other extreme, saying that it is merely equivalent to "man", in the weakest possible sense, and therefore when used by Our Lord of Himself means no more than the

<sup>1</sup> It is used in Matthew about thirty times, and since these cover all but about five of the uses in all the gospels, all quotations of the term are from Matthew.

<sup>2</sup> *Le Messianisme chez les Juifs*, Paris 1920, pp. 224-7.



personal pronoun "I" (rather as the Syriac "naphshi", my soul, meaning "myself"). It is certainly possible that occasionally one or other of the evangelists may have written this when Our Lord in fact used simply the pronoun; so in Mt. xvi.13 where we read, "Whom do men say that the Son of Man is?", the parallel passages of Mark and Luke have simply, "Whom do they say I am?" But throughout the gospel as a whole, it is used too often and too definitely to be merely the evangelist's idea of a personal pronoun—it must have some foundation in an equally significant use of it by Our Lord Himself.

Coming now to the actual texts we notice that they fall into two distinct groups—one stressing the humanity of Our Lord, the other His glory. In the first we find that "the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head"—God though He is, He has become like the meanest of His creatures: "the Son of Man eats and drinks" just as other men do: so well is the other nature concealed that though an insult to the Holy Ghost will not be forgiven, "anyone who speaks against the Son of Man will be forgiven": though the apostles know He is the Son of the living God, to the world in general he is a man as they are: "Whom do men say that the Son of Man is?" So truly is He man that He is to suffer and die: "It is necessary for the Son of Man to be mocked and scourged and crucified".

"He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross: therefore God exalted Him. . . ." So we have the second series of texts: in all those texts in which the death of the Son of Man is predicted, it is equally clearly stated that the same Son of Man shall rise again: the same Son of Man who has nowhere to lay His head encourages His apostles by telling them that some of them will not die "till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom": He has "power on earth to forgive sins", and at the Last Day "the Son of Man will come in majesty, seated on the clouds of heaven, and all His angels around Him", to judge everyone according to their deeds. In this context also we can insert the isolated instances in *Acts* and *Apocalypse*, referred to above—the Son of Man, as judge, in the glory of heaven. And finally, one should note the significant text of Jn. v.27; God has given the Son "power to judge, because He is the Son of Man".

Now in the first series of texts, Our Lord is clearly identifying Himself with mankind; everything that is human He has accepted. He even says explicitly that it is all for our sakes. In the parable of the sower, He explains that the one who sows the seed is the Son of Man—surely, as Son of Man: only by becoming man could He do it. Similarly, the Son of Man has come to seek that which was lost; He has come to give His life a redemption for many.



But if that is true of the first series of texts, surely it must be true of the second also : if He is humbled "for our sakes", His glory equally must be "for our sakes" : if He is identified with humanity in its weakness, they must be identified with Him in His glory. This too is borne out by the texts. In Mt. XII.8 Our Lord concludes one of His disputes with the Pharisees concerning the Sabbath by saying : "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath" ; Mark, in the parallel passage, has : "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath ; so that the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath". Without going into details of exegesis, it does seem to suggest some participation by men in Christ's privilege as Son of Man. Notice, too, the text quoted from St John : Our Lord is judge precisely because He is man, because "He could feel like us, and be our true representative before God . . . because He himself has been tried by suffering" (Heb. II.17, 18 ; cf. v.7 ff.). And so Our Lord associates men with Him in the glory of His judgment : "When the Son of Man takes His throne in glory you who have followed me will sit with Him, judging . . ." (cf. Mt. XIX.28).

Man even in his natural state has a God-given dignity : "Man, the son of Man, is only a little less than the angels, crowned with glory and honour" (cf. Ps. VIII.5, 6). But left to himself he cannot achieve this full human dignity—that is the point of Romans I : "all have sinned and made void God's glory". God had to become man to attain for man man's destiny. "*Sed non sicut delictum ita et donum*" : He did more than that. For Our Lord, to become Son of Man meant humbling His divinity to our humanity ; but for men it means the fulfilment of human nature not only to its full human perfection, but to a dignity beyond the claims of humanity—"mirabilis reformasti". He is the first-born of all creation, He is the head, in Him all fulness dwells so that in Him all is restored.<sup>1</sup> It is God's will that everything should be fulfilled and perfected in Him.<sup>2</sup> The mystery of God's plan is Christ, that all men should be perfect in Him.<sup>3</sup> He remakes us in the image of His own glory.<sup>4</sup>

St Paul speaks of the second Adam and the Mystical Body. Matthew says "Son of Man". But the mystery of our incorporation into Christ is present in Matthew's simplicity just as much as in Paul's mysticism.

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<sup>1</sup> cf. Col. I.15-20.

<sup>3</sup> cf. Col. I.27, 28.

<sup>2</sup> cf. Eph. I.10.

<sup>4</sup> cf. Phil. III.21.

## QUESTION AND ANSWER

*The Roman Catholic Church claims to be the Christian Church founded by Jesus. On what parts of the New Testament do they base this claim?*

It is the belief of Catholics that Christ, Who wishes all men to be saved, not only established a Church, which was to be the means to salvation, but also determined its essential structure, and endowed it with the fullness of power in the spiritual order.

The first point to be noted is the pre-eminence given in the Gospels to the Apostle Peter. He is mentioned in the first place, not only in the general lists of disciples (Mk. III.16-19; Mt. X.2-4; Lk. VI.14-16) but also when the three privileged apostles are cited together (Mk. V.37; IX.1; XIV.33). Time and again he speaks on behalf of the other disciples (Mk. X.28; XI.21; Mt. XV.15; XVI.16, 22; XVIII.21; XIX.27; Lk. XII.41; Jn. VI.68-9): he is given the symbolic name of "The Rock" (Jn. I.42): he personally benefits from the miraculous power of Christ (Lk. V.3-10; Mt. XIV.27-36); he is singled out in the Risen Christ's instructions to the Holy Women (Mk. XVI.7), and is favoured with a personal apparition (Lk. XXIV.34; I Cor. XV.5).

That Peter's pre-eminence involved a true primacy over the other apostles, and thus of the Church, is shown from three texts where Christ publicly invested Peter as head of His community of salvation (Mt. XVI.17-19; Lk. XXII.31-2; Jn. XXI. 15-17). Being the most explicit, the text from Matthew has aroused most discussion on the triple count of authenticity, historical value and interpretation. Considerations of space must limit our remarks to the briefest.

Suffice it to say that the three verses in question are extremely well attested, either in full or with only minor omissions, in all the manuscripts and versions; that no ancient writer, treating the passage, will be found to omit all of them; finally, that the strong semitic flavour of the language used is sufficient indication of the primitiveness of the passage. Most Protestant writers would agree with Catholics in upholding the authenticity and historical character of this text, and of the ones in Luke and John; but their various interpretations have all sought to exclude either the personal or permanent nature of the promise made to Peter—interpretations, however, which could not satisfy so independent a critic as M. Loisy (*cf. Les évangiles synoptiques*, tom. II, pp. 7-8).

For Catholics, Peter has been established as the foundation of the

edifice of Christ's Church, and in the context of a *living* building, "foundation" means "chief" or "head", which gives strength, and, by authority, unity. Under a variety of figures, Christ indicates the fullness of Peter's jurisdiction and teaching authority: the power of the keys, according to biblical usage (Is. XXII.22; Apoc. III.7), shows that Peter, as majordomo, has full authority over Christ's House, able to allow or refuse admittance: similarly, the office of Shepherd—*ποίμαινεν*—(Jn. XXI) in the language of Scripture means the power to govern (*cf.* II Kings V.2; VII.7; Ps. II.9; Zach. XI.9), and since no restriction is made by Christ, we must conclude that it extends to all acts which the wise administration of the new community would require: this figure is close to that of the Lucan text, where Peter is depicted as the spiritual guardian of his brethren, and where his faith, which had led him to confess the Divinity of Christ in Matthew, is pronounced indestructible: finally, "to bind" and "to loose", almost technical terms in Scripture, convey full legislative and judiciary power.

The apostles, as a body under the leadership of Peter, were commissioned to preach the integrity of Christ's Gospel, and to ensure the fidelity of their preaching, Christ promised his continual assistance (Mt. XXVIII.19 ff.; Mk. XVI.15 ff.). St Paul explains why Christ appointed privileged rulers and teachers in the Church (Eph. IV.11), namely, to ensure doctrinal stability (V.14). This object still exists today, and it is the belief of Catholics that it is attained in the same way, under the leadership of Peter and the apostles, which is continued in their successors, in that Church which Christ founded, and to which He has promised His lasting protection.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

*The Holy Bible.* VOL. I, *Genesis to Ruth* : translated from the original languages with critical use of all the ancient sources by members of the Catholic Biblical Association of America. 2nd edn. Paterson, New Jersey 1953. \$4.50.

According to the Holy Father the Bible is the heaven-sent treasure which Holy Church considers as the most precious source of doctrine on faith or morals. But this treasure is largely neglected. There are many obstacles, particularly in the case of the Old Testament ; the very antiquity of these books makes much contained in them obscure ; the text has inevitably suffered during the centuries of transmission ; it is completely inaccessible to the vast majority who cannot read the languages in which it is written. We depend upon translation, and when the translation adds its own obscurities and mistakes, it is hardly surprising that most of the Old Testament is never read. Yet we live in an age when scholars are succeeding as never before, in lessening these obstacles. In his encyclical *Divino afflante* the Holy Father speaks with enthusiasm of the renaissance of Catholic biblical scholarship ; there is now a much deeper appreciation of the many problems, and a much wider knowledge of ancient languages ; we have made great progress towards recovering the original text. The time is therefore ripe for a renewed appreciation of the Holy Scriptures. One thing remains : that all this progress should be put at the disposal of the majority by a faithful translation into the vernacular. The Episcopal Committee of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine in the United States, seizing the opportunity with alacrity, and eager to follow the recommendations of the Holy Father, requested the members of the Catholic Biblical Association of America to translate the Sacred Scriptures from the original languages or from the oldest extant form of the text, in as correct a form as possible. This present volume, already in its second edition, is the first of four, destined to give us the Old Testament. The task of the translator of the Bible is extremely difficult. The intention of the American scholars has been to render the word of God into the vernacular with rigorous fidelity to the meaning of the original, and expressed in simple and intelligible language. They have succeeded admirably, and we who are fortunate enough to share a common language are grateful to them. This translation is scrupulously faithful to the original text, but there are inevitably many instances where the text is so obscure that unanimous

agreement upon its meaning will never be obtained. Every translator must make his choice, without feeling altogether satisfied ; in such cases the American translators have generally retained the traditional interpretation : e.g. "He shall *crush* your head, and you shall *lie in wait* for his heel" (Gen. iii.15). "Then Melchisedec, the king of Salem, brought out bread and wine ; *for* he was a priest . . ." (Gen. xiv.18). "A *smoking oven* and a fiery torch passed between the pieces" (Gen. xv.17). The Divine name is translated throughout by : The Lord ; in a note to Ex. iii.14 the translator explains that this represents the traditional substitution of *Adoni* for the proper personal name *Yahweh* ; it is difficult to decide whether traditional usage is preferable, since the use of *Yahweh* is not mere pedantry as some have supposed, but has its real implications. It is at times a delicate question whether we ought to retain a translation more close to the Hebrew than English style allows ; thus to speak of "*The soles of the feet of the priests*" (Jos. iii.13) seems to be exaggerated fidelity : the reason for further definition of *feet* in Hebrew does not exist in English. In Deut. xviii.15 : "A prophet like me will the Lord your God raise up", we have, as is duly pointed out in a footnote, an example of the collective noun representing a particular class ; would it not be more faithful to the text to translate *prophets* ? Concerning such minute details there will always be argument, and as all will appreciate, there will never be a translation into the vernacular which is altogether free from them. The format of this version in itself makes a great contribution to the correct understanding of the text. It is divided into paragraphs, with headings which are excellent summaries ; they serve a most useful purpose in helping the reader to realise that these books are composed of collections of short stories, sometimes concerned with the same incident. Thus without any mention of sources, this arrangement enables the student to appreciate the question as he would never have done when using the Douay.

Whilst fidelity to the originals is of primary importance, we are naturally interested in the style of English used, though I wish to make it perfectly clear that in all my remarks on the style of language, I merely judge from the standpoint of an English reader, for whom the version was not intended. In the preface we read : "As regards the matter of English style, it will be seen that the deliberate compromise with earlier usage frequently retained in Bible translations has been given up". Surely, they might well have continued, we have had sufficient revisions and compromises to teach us that complete success is never attained that way. Instead, they have given us simple and intelligible language, as they intended. On first reading, the English may seem pedestrian, but this is almost wholly due to the well-known

dread we have of losing the familiar biblical phrases. There is in general no trace of strange idiom, though there are particular examples of less desirable words, such as "There was not yet any *field shrub* on the earth" (Gen. II.5), "The Lord said to Moses' *aide* Josue" (Jos. I.I), "Juda went down from his relatives *to tent* near an Adullamite" (Gen. XXXVIII.I). The individual translators have carefully avoided idiosyncrasies; none of the books betrays an individual style, which, however striking it might be, would be quite undesirable in a version of the Bible; they thus attain a uniform standard which, whilst doubtless appearing dull until it has acquired the veneration which only comes from use, is far more lasting and far better suited to this particular purpose. In spite, therefore, of the occasional strange word or phrase, English readers will find in this version a clear and readable text, which will prove immensely valuable. Anyone who uses the *Catholic Commentary* must realise how much responsibility attaches to the Douay, even after the revisions, for the obscurities which at times make the reading of the Old Testament so wearisome a task. Anyone teaching biblical exegesis, so largely frustrated because of the lack of a Catholic English version which accurately represents the original text, will envy their American colleagues; released from the task of changing a word here, a word there, in almost every verse on which they are commenting, they will be able to devote their undivided attention to the theological interpretation. According to *Divino afflante* "Commentators must have as their chief object to show what is the theological doctrine touching faith and morals of each book and text". But there are few students who do not need a version; there are few who can survive the additional difficulties which an obscure or inaccurate version brings with it.

T. WORDEN

*An Introduction to the Revised Standard Version of the Old Testament* by Members of the Revision Committee: Luther A. Weigle, Chairman. Nelson, London 1952, pp. 92. 5s.

This book consists of a collection of essays, written by members of the Committee which worked upon the Revised Standard Version of the Old Testament, published in September 1952. They are written for the general public and designed to help readers to understand the main principles which guided the revisers. The Revised Standard Version of the Bible is an authorised revision of the American Standard Version, published in 1901. This latter was the American modification of the English Revised Version which had appeared in 1881-5. The

Council appointed to have charge of the text of the American Standard Version decided in 1937 that there was need for a thorough revision of the version of 1901, which would stay as close to the Tyndale-King James tradition as it could, in the light of modern progress in the knowledge of the Hebrew and Greek texts on the one hand, and contemporary understanding of English on the other. The result of this great undertaking appeared in 1952, and has been welcomed with enthusiasm both for its fidelity to the original texts and for the standard of English maintained throughout.

This collection of essays will help those who make use of the Version, to appreciate it further, because we cannot but feel the greatest admiration for the care shown by the revisers to safeguard the accuracy and fidelity of the translation. It is difficult for the general reader to appreciate the difficulties which face those who undertake the revision of a Bible translation. In addition to all the thorny problems which harass any translator, there is in this case, the additional question of what degree of change from the basic text is permissible. The very words of a Bible translation quickly endear themselves to devout readers, and any change, however slight, is quickly noticed and often resented. Yet we all know that there are many English words which in course of time have changed their meaning, and which no longer convey the sense intended by the translators. In such cases revision is necessary. There is, however, a danger that in carrying out such a revision, too much attention be paid to the striking but ephemeral idioms of contemporary usage. The Committee entrusted with this task have wisely taken precautions against this danger which proves so strong a temptation to modern translators of the Bible. "We have resisted the temptation to use phrases that are merely current usage, and have sought to put the message of the Bible in simple, enduring words that are worthy to stand in the great Tyndale-King James tradition". They were also aware of another danger, a danger which, it is true, threatens the translator more than the reviser, of imposing theological interpretations under the guise of clarifying the text. There are very many passages in the Bible which are difficult to understand, and about which the exegetes are uncertain. The translation, therefore, which clears up all difficulties, and makes every passage perfectly obvious, cannot but be suspect. The Bible translator is not an expositor; however pronounced his views about Biblical doctrines, he has no right whatever to intrude his opinions into the translation. His one responsibility is to render the Biblical meaning as accurately and effectively as is possible into appropriate English.

The main value of this book, therefore, is to give general readers some insight into the difficulties which beset the Bible translator and



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to explain how these difficulties were faced in this particular case. But there are also other interesting essays full of useful information about the Old Testament, on the text and versions, the poetry and wisdom literature, and the use of the Old Testament in worship.

T. WORDEN

H. H. Rowley, *The Unity of the Bible*. The Carey Kingsgate Press, London 1953. Pp. x + 201. 15s.

The Bible is God's word to men given "on divers occasions and in various ways". In the early ages of the Church, the overwhelming importance of the fact that it is God's word succeeded in giving a certain unity to the whole—often in too simple a sense. In later years the recognition of the part played by the human authors, with vastly differing styles and characteristics and aims, has led to greater stress on the diversity of the Bible, diversity which outside the Church is often represented as opposition. The six lectures which Rowley presents in this book are a corrective to this point of view.

The first essay explains what is meant by unity: that there is diversity in the Bible is too obvious to be denied; there are different points of view, there are different levels of thought, not all is of the same value; but through it all there is the sign-manual of the one guiding spirit which gives unity, a dynamic, developing unity, to the whole. The second essay exemplifies this in the case of the law and the prophets; too often thought of as opposing trends in Israel, they are here shown to be rather two complementary views. Next, Rowley gives what is really a resumé of biblical theology in showing that the teaching of the Bible on God and man is consistent though progressive. Then in three further essays, he shows that the same unity extends beyond the borders of the Old Testament to link up with the New—a transcendent unity, not just a natural development; one in which the promise and teaching of the Old is fulfilled; the idea of sacrifice perfected in the Cross; the sacraments being the last stage in the continual themes of divine initiative and man's free response.

There is very little in the book which could not meet with approval from Catholics. His treatment of baptism in the last chapter, which from many other points of view also is the weakest in the book, is one such exception; but even here the disagreement is really on the part played by the church in revelation, rather than on strictly biblical points. One is surprised, however, to find such an unprejudiced scholar falling into a simple error concerning the Catholic doctrine of canonicity. Talking about the books we call deuterocanonical, he

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says that even since the Council of Trent individuals have expressed doubts about them. But when we consult the references he gives (p. 93, n.1), we find that the authors quoted are doing no more than explaining the difference between proto- and deuterocanonical books. Sixtus of Sienna, for example, expressly states that all the books he is dealing with are "*libri canonici*", and if we make a distinction between certitudine because they are "*prior ac posterior non auctoritate aut them it is aut dignitate . . . sed tempore*". The same also is the sense of the other authors quoted. If that is what Rowley understands by "doubts", they are to be found not merely in the few authors he refers to, but in any manual of Introduction.

Such minor points should not detract from the fact that the book contains an abundance of information and discussion, characterised by a sanity and solidity of judgment. It has much in common with Coppens's *Harmonies des Deux Testament*; and this style of thought is essential to anyone who has to deal with the Old Testament. It may do something to counter the complete misapprehension of the nature of religion, and in particular of revealed religion which is implied in the "Entmythologisierung" thinking.

L. JOHNSTON

Margaret T. Monro, *Thinking about Genesis*. Longmans, Green and Co., London 1954. Pp. xxvii + 221. 11s.

The title of this book gives the clue to its scope. It is "a selection from the thinking of many years, the fruit of a preoccupation which . . . has hinged on the special difficulties which the first book of the Bible presents to men and women of our times". It is not an introduction in the usual sense, though it provides a clear summary of the notions necessary for the ordinary non-specialist reader in approaching Genesis. Nor is it a detailed commentary. Yet Miss Monro covers the whole ground and neglects none of the main problems which the book presents.

The author brings to her task a long familiarity with Bible lands, a knowledge of Semitic modes of thought and expression, and an up-to-date acquaintance with recent archaeological discoveries and current trends in Biblical scholarship. These qualifications might portend a work of dry-as-dust erudition, but the author never loses the human touch or allows human nature to be "lost to sight behind a mound of paper clippings".

After an Introduction setting forth the purpose and method of her book, and treating of the Hebrew text, translations, and canon, the

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body of the work is divided into two main parts, "The History" (the Patriarchal Period) and "The Pre-History" (Gen. 1-11). The book of *Genesis* is thus firmly anchored in an historical period known to us from contemporary secular records, before the earlier history (which for the most part takes us beyond the period of written sources) is considered. The final chapter treats of the Messianic Hope.

It is refreshing to find that the author does not regard the latest word on the problems of *Genesis* as necessarily the last word. While pointing out flaws in the Graf-Wellhausen theory, she gives a sympathetic summary of the recent Swedish theory of "traditionism", and then owns to a mischievous feeling that the time is ripe for someone to put forward the subversive theory that Moses is really the author or chief author of the books ascribed to him ! This detached attitude makes for balance of judgment in a field where it is especially needful.

The educated reader who seeks a modern, informed and judicious treatment of the problems raised by the *Genesis* accounts of Creation, the Flood, the Fall, cannot do better than read this work. It imparts incidentally much information on Biblical and allied topics, as a glance at the four-page index will indicate. A very valuable feature is the way in which the lasting values, religious and human, of *Genesis* are illustrated. Her insights into the characters and situations, her personal reflections on such topics as Old Testament historical writing, on myths and symbolism, will stir her readers to emulate her in "thinking about *Genesis*". And we share her hope that her thoughts on the first book of the Bible will kindle her readers' interest in the Old Testament as a whole.

P. J. MORRIS

